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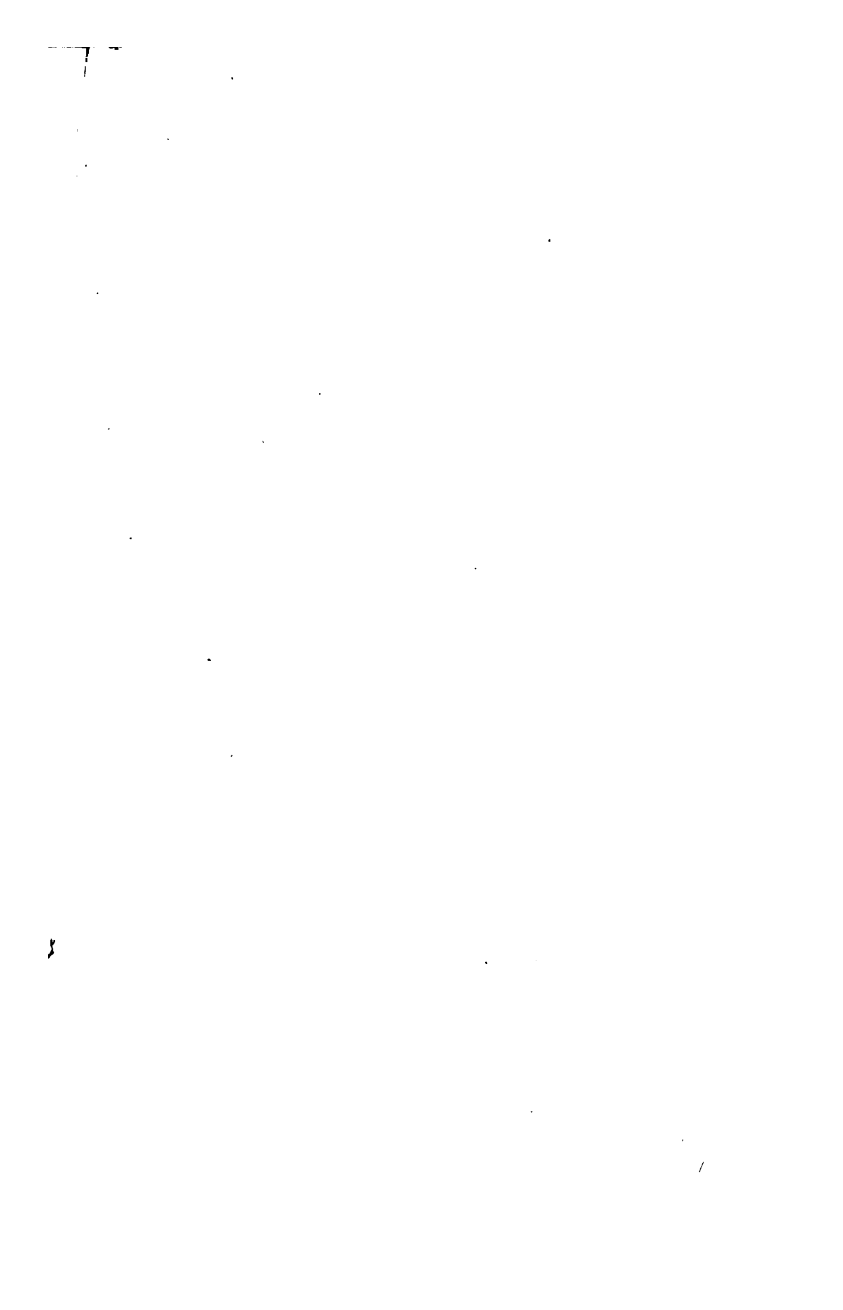
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THE REGENERATE LIFE

MUIR AND PATERSON, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

THE
REGENERATE LIFE

Dissertations

By JAMES ARBOUIN

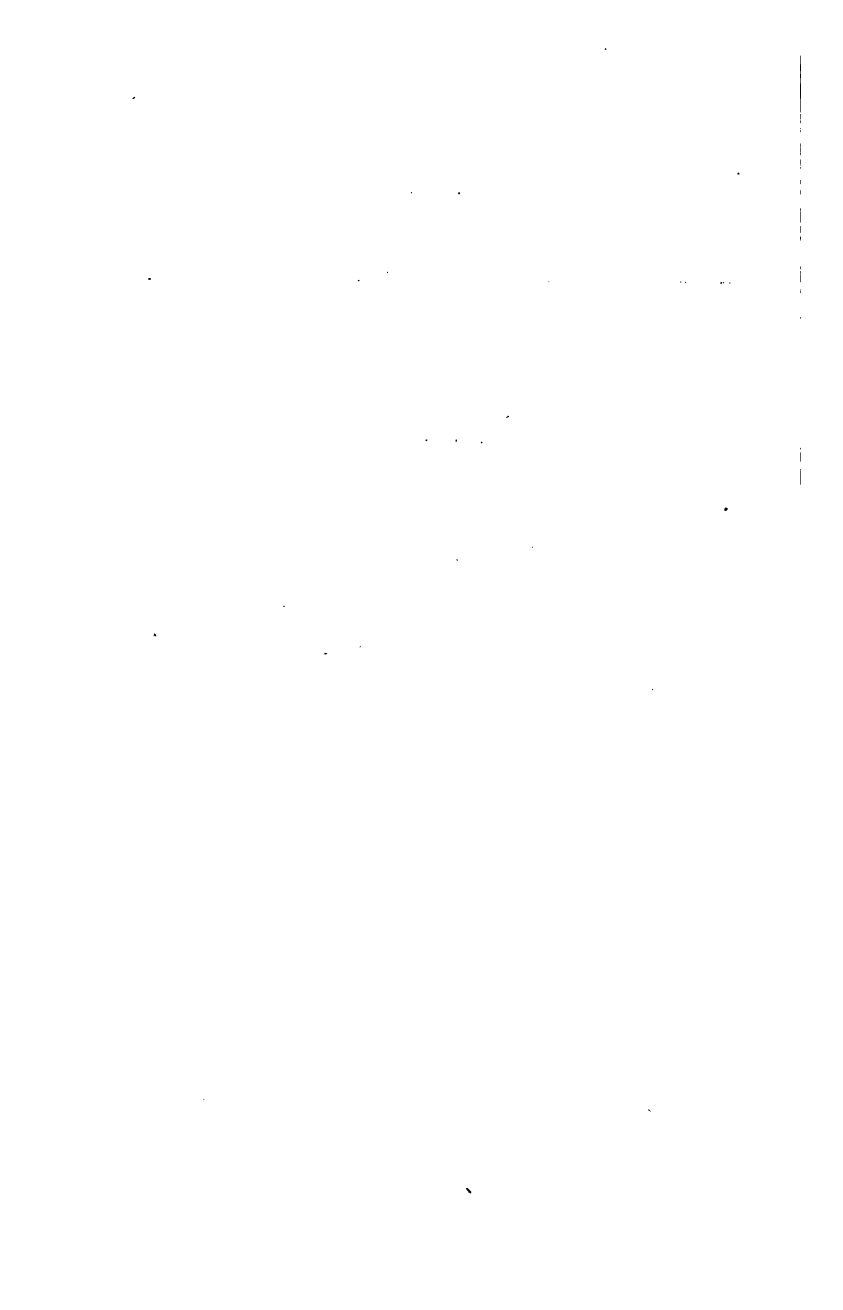
NEW EDITION REVISED BY H. S.



JAMES SPEIRS
36 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON

1877

141. m. 504.



Dedication.

This edition of a book which has been dear to me since I was a child, which has helped to sustain me in my seasons of trial, and to chasten me in my seasons of prosperity, I affectionately dedicate to

Jules Gontien,

in memory of many happy hours of reading, conversation, and spiritual companionship, in a distant foreign land.

H. S.

CHRISTMAS, 1876.

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On Regeneration.

PART I.

THE first birth of man is of the body, for its proper uses and functions in the world ; the second birth, or regeneration, is of the mind, for its proper uses and functions in the world, and, after this life, for sublimer uses in a spiritual body in heaven.

The mind of man, consisting of his will and understanding, having through successive generations been drawn aside from the path of true happiness, and been too much captivated with this world to think sufficiently of its higher destination, it has become a work of persevering difficulty to regulate its powers, so as to bring them into obedience to the Divine precepts, and into an order of life such as the heavenly inhabitants are subject to and delight in. The first dawn of the infant mind is to the use of the bodily senses, by which the body itself is preserved, and its health promoted. It is well, therefore, judiciously to indulge these first delights of the mind, which are

so closely connected with the body,—growing with its growth, and strengthening with its strength. In the mind's maturer state, when the powers of reason are unfolded, the precepts of virtue taught by revelation should become the habitual rule of life: and, in proportion as their influence prevails, man becomes a creature of order,—what is sensual becomes obedient to what is rational, and what is rational to what is divine. This order constitutes the second birth, or regeneration; for as the body was born of its earthly parents, so in the regeneration the mind is born of God: its primary affections are fixed on the Heavenly Father, in the exercise of the love of that goodness which constitutes His nature; and its subordinate affections are exercised in the promotion of the happiness and well-being of mankind, which is coincident with the love of truth, or of the true order of things. The love of self, and of worldly possessions, are the prevailing obstacles to this great work, which cannot advance until these degraded affections are subdued, or rendered subordinate to the more elevated pursuits of heavenly love.

To be regenerated, is to prefer an heavenly inheritance to an earthly one; the attainment of moral excellence to that of worldly opulence, power, or fame; the love of justice and of social kindness to pre-eminence, or to temporal rewards of any kind;—

it is to prefer humble adoration to self-elevation, and contentment to ambition. Every one is regenerated only in the degree that the love of God and neighbourly love, bearing sway in the inmost affections of the soul, are manifested in all the varieties of forms of the life and conversation.

On Regeneration.

PART II.

AS regeneration advances, the soul's perception becomes more refined, and the minuter shades of distinction between good and evil are seen in clearer light. In the commencement of the formation of the new will and understanding grosser evils were shunned : so, now, the lesser ones come into view ; and many of these, which before were admitted or excused, are now by experience known to be hurtful, and as such are abandoned. Many things which before were rejected with pain, and occasioned deep regret when brought before the tribunal of the understanding, are now condemned by the immediate instinctive sensation of the will or affection. Thus eternity becomes, as it were, the touchstone of time ; our actions here are transferred in thought to our trial there ; and the mind revolts at any principle, in its voluntary practice, which it would not wish to appear undisguised and naked before the sight of the angels.

In the more interior stages of the new birth, or of the heavenly order of the heart and mind, all things are referred to God. If success attend our temporal undertakings, we shall discern in our successes so many gifts from God intended for the extension of our sphere of usefulness; and our triumphs will be those of thanksgiving and praise. Should adverse fortune prevail, we shall conclude that it is best for us, and that some attainments in goodness, which we are lacking, are forming in the crucible for our future advancement. If we suffer pain, we shall know that our patience and submission are to be exercised, and that thus some dross which adheres too strongly is being removed from the virgin gold: thus the trial, however severe it may be, is gratefully endured as a purifying process. Do we suffer by slanderous tongues? We shall look up to the Lord as our judge. Do our enemies prosper, and does malignity triumph over us? We shall consider that the purposes, as well as the conditions of all men, are under the supreme control of the Lord, whose footsteps of infinite goodness, wisdom, and power are unknown to us. Does death threaten us at the moment in which our temporal concerns take a brighter form? We shall consider that we know not what decoy may lurk in the transient sunshine; and we shall remember that a brighter sun awaits us, with unceasing rays, in the world beyond

The diagram illustrates the experimental setup. A participant is seated at a table, looking at a video screen. A camera is positioned above the screen. A target is placed on the table. A horizontal arrow indicates the direction of movement from the starting point to the target. A vertical arrow indicates the direction of movement from the target to the starting point. A horizontal arrow indicates the direction of movement from the starting point to the target. A vertical arrow indicates the direction of movement from the target to the starting point. A horizontal arrow indicates the direction of movement from the starting point to the target. A vertical arrow indicates the direction of movement from the target to the starting point.

On Regeneration.

PART III.

IN the progress of regeneration, the changes of state are for the most part inscrutable. Most of them transcend angelic wisdom, and are known to the Lord alone. The little, however, which we perceive, we are sometimes enabled to describe with some degree of clearness.

When the mind is awakened to spiritual views, like a tree decorated with leaves in spring, every new shoot puts forth new beauty as it emerges from its winter state, until it is crowned and surrounded with blossoms, or with spiritual truths, which afford delightful promise of an abundance of heavenly fruit, in the degree that they escape the blighting winds of self-love and the love of the world. The mind thus arrayed, in the early spring of the regenerate life, is delightful to behold, and many will be attracted more by the appearance of its blossoms, than gratified by the deeper reflection that the tree must retire again to a comparatively winter-like state, and that what is outwardly so gratifying to the sight must give way

to the formation of fruits still more gratifying, in their usefulness for the sustenance of life. Temptations often repeated, and sometimes attended with direful despondency, will assail the new convert, and at times will lead his mind into the very desert of the wilderness, that it may contemplate its own vileness, discover its manifold evils, and look up to the Lord alone for deliverance. These temptations will excite an increasing abhorrence of evil ; and the sufferer in them, when refreshed with intervals of peace, will acknowledge at heart, that one genuine ray of spiritual sunshine is far more exhilarating than all the natural delights which, in the former life, had been sought with so much eagerness, and cultivated with so much care.

As the new satisfactions acquire strength, the former ones become more and more insipid, until the objects of time gradually shrink from the mind that already grasps eternity, and until the enlivening prospects of futurity, built upon a sincere desire of obedience to the Divine laws, give a serenity of mind which the restless billows of passion cannot disturb. Worldly pleasures have been repeatedly experienced to end in pain, in satiety, regret, dissatisfaction and disgust : spiritual sufferings, on the contrary, end in tears of delight ; in calm and humble submission ; in the sweetness of heavenly resolutions ; in the reviving hope, and sometimes in the foretaste, of future felicity.

The former pleasures were attended with disappointment almost in their enjoyment ; but the new satisfactions are built upon everlasting foundations, and are only taken from us occasionally, again to be restored to us, strengthened and increased by means of combats against those selfish and worldly foes which would deprive us of them ; and that thus we may be rendered more and more sensible that they are, in every degree of their attainment, like our life itself, the free gift of God.

The spiritual life in its progress has much to undergo from uncongenialities, and very often as much from erroneous conclusions. So soon as we begin to prefer heaven to earth, we are impatient to be translated to a celestial clime, in whose pure atmosphere we have not yet lungs to breathe, and where we should, consequently, lose the pulsation of the heart. Heavenly affections are acquired by slow degrees : they are not promoted by impatient wishes and fruitless sighs. The spiritual traveller, who, on his first setting out, sighs so frequently for heaven, will probably find, on a slight examination of his state, that he often sighs likewise for those worldly possessions which he fancies he could so aptly accommodate to spiritual use,—not discovering the lure which fascinates him. Painful uncongenialities, occasioned by a forced intercourse with the world, however they may sicken on the new-

born taste of the spiritual mind, perform important uses, by opening the contrast to our own views, which brighten by comparison with things opposite ; and by forcing self, in the subtle form of spiritual selfishness, to subside. The latter effect results from a discovery of the states of the minds of others, to whom, although in them we may see much to avoid, we may endeavour to administer kind and seasonable aid. Such uncongenialities, also, by causing a temporary privation of what we most prefer, will enliven our relish for it. There is, doubtless, a particular and unerring providence in bringing us into situations that excite aversion, equally as into those which most favour our truest delights. When the spiritual mind has advanced in progress to the dawn of the celestial state, it will make more interior discoveries by a single glance, than it could have made in its prior states by its deepest researches, and in its clearest vision.

The *spiritual* mind is in the perception of causes, or means, which are Divine truths, far above the comprehension of the *natural* mind, labouring, as it does, in the dark shade of effects ; but the *celestial* mind is in the perception of ends, which manifest the Divine goodness, and which, by the former causes or means, are brought into accomplishment in their effects. It has a lively sensation, as well as vision, that the beginnings and endings of all things are in God. It is

most in self-annihilation when in its most lucid states, for it is then most in the reception of goodness from its Divine Source ; and when it is in the twilight of its evening shade, it quietly submits, and waits the revival of its energies with the rising sun. Evil, which the *natural* mind indulges, and which the *spiritual* mind condemns, the *celestial* mind views with pity, as a feeble, unavailing effort, the sad delusion of insanity, and the fretful workings of disorders which must be overcome.

The *natural* mind exults in selfish and worldly loves : the *spiritual* mind is at war against them, and is blessed with intervals of peace : the *celestial* mind, having subdued them by power from the Lord, presents such affections as are best calculated to win upon the heart.

The *natural* mind offers the seduction of false delights : the *spiritual* mind offers the force of religious precept, realized by example : the *celestial* mind shows that the end of the commandment is peace, and would win men to it by love.

The *natural* mind is confined to earth, where it would gladly prolong its existence : the *spiritual* mind would gladly leave earth for heaven, and join the ascending angels which Jacob saw : the *celestial* mind, having reached the summit of the heavenly ladder, would return with the descending angels, to invite others to the celestial abodes.

On the Natural and the Spiritual Mind.

AS the mind of the regenerating Christian advances towards maturity, it contemplates the pursuits of men whose minds are still merely natural as the wanderings of insanity, which give fancied substantial forms to fleeting shadows. Everything which is of a transient nature is viewed by them as permanent, and everything which is of a spiritual and permanent nature as visionary : thus, bodily delights, which are constantly weakening, are speculated upon, and fostered, as though they were to last for ever : power and riches, honour and fame, which time mocks, and death extinguishes, employ all their mental energies ; and at last they are like the infant hand that would grasp quicksilver, and which, when laid open, has nothing in it !

That veneration for the Supreme Being which all His works without us, as well as within us, should excite, giving birth to a benevolence encircling all mankind, the ambitious and restless cannot feel, since their ruling purpose is to make themselves great and

mighty, by thinking little of the Supreme Power, and by seeking to increase their own enjoyments, instead of contributing to the happiness of their neighbour.

In the regeneration, every natural joy, of however fair, plausible, and pleasing a complexion, must fade away, in order to its being renewed from a spiritual root, which will reanimate the natural joy, and give it a permanent nature, by uniting it with eternal views. As regeneration advances, alternate desolations and supports become more frequent. The former are often attended with sad despondency, and, of the Lord's mercy, are shortened, as they become more acute. The supports, which are frequently marked with particular providences, are also often of short duration. In the desolations we perceive our own nothingness; and in the supports we perceive the Lord's power. Were the supports to last, we might fancy ourselves to be something; and were the desolations to last, the Lord's power would disappear, leaving us apparently to perish. In proportion as we acquire the habit of feeling, as well as of intellectually viewing ourselves as nothing, and the Lord as all in all, our states become more and more perfected, and we enter more and more into conscious communion with Him.

Concerning the Delights and Progress of Religion.

THE first abode of religion is in the memory ; the second is in the understanding ; and the last is in the heart. By prudent and religious parents, the subjects of religion are gradually introduced to the infant mind ; particularly by means of those pleasing, interesting, and instructive narratives with which the Scriptures abound. The story of Joseph and his brethren, that of David and Goliath, and other interesting histories recorded in the Bible, are calculated, not only to inspire a relish for sacred subjects, but also to lay the foundation of spiritual veneration for, and trust in the Supreme Being, as also of Christian benevolence, and charity towards the neighbour. In maturer years, if these early impressions have not been superseded by an excessive concern about vain and trifling worldly things, the mind will revert to them, while contemplating the deeper truths of the Divine Word, and will compare the lessons of early instruction with the

ideas formed in a freer and more advanced state of the understanding. The precepts of the Divine Word will then be received as an unerring rule, counteracting numberless propensities which stand in opposition to them: and, when they are once firmly believed to be indispensable both for our present and our future felicity, an internal struggle and warfare will commence between the false delights of erring reason and passion, and the calm and sober delights of rectified reason and subordinated inclination. While this contention continues, many bitter days will be experienced, marked by spiritual, and possibly by temporal privations, and by the difficult subjugation of acquired evil habits, and the abandonment of hurtful or delusive pursuits. Internal peace cannot be experienced until our spiritual foes are subdued, and until experience has realized those heavenly satisfactions for the attainment of which our understandings first submitted themselves to Divine teaching and guidance. When the will acquiesces in the dictates of the Divine commandments as its rules of life, and the will and understanding harmoniously conspire to form new habits of thought and action, the delights of religion then shed their mild and heavenly radiance on the heart. Instead of revenge, hatred, and malice; the delights of a forgiving spirit are experienced. Instead of the restless aims of ambition; gratitude and contentment

give a relish to the most moderate earthly possessions. Even the lapse of time becomes a source of delight, because heralding the approach of our immortal existence. Our prospects being eternal, eternal ends are seen even in the possessions of this transitory life, forming, as they do, the beginning links in the chain of our everlasting existence. These possessions, indeed, do not consist only of worldly wealth, or of abundance in worldly things,—which, if obtained, are principally regarded for their use,—but they also consist of the imperishable satisfactions which we find in the treasures of heavenly wisdom unfolded in the sacred Word ; which we find, also, in acts of benevolence ; in well-founded hopes ; in calm dependence on Divine Providence ; in sweet social intercourse ; in heavenly communications ; in retired meditation ; in prayer ; in worship that never ceases ; and in activities which charity constantly induces, with the view of promoting the happiness of others. The purposes and actions of wicked men are patiently borne with, and prudently opposed when opposition is necessary for the defence of the cause of goodness. The delights of religion may be interrupted, but they cannot be destroyed. Being sown on immortal ground, they will survive the transient sufferings and difficulties of time, and will flourish with everlasting increase in heaven.

On Truth.

“Pilate said, What is Truth?”—*John* xviii. 38.

THIS question, of most important and extensive meaning, can only be answered according to the feeble apprehensions of the human mind. Truth, in its origin, belongs to the Deity alone. Truth is order; the perfection of form; the manifestation of goodness: therefore truth is the form of God, whose essence is goodness. This explanation may be illustrated from the natural world, where are corresponding forms that meet our apprehension. The natural sun is an image of what is Divine: its essence is heat, its manifestation is light, and these, together, are the constituents of order in the natural world; for light reveals the operation of the sun's heat in the progressive maturity of multiplied forms of use and beauty. In like manner, Gospel light, or spiritual truth, is the manifestation of goodness, which vivifies the spiritual world within us with the Divine heat of love.

As a created being, I desire above all things to be acquainted with my Creator; to know His nature and attributes; also to know myself, and what I can do to gain His favour and love. Truth tells me what He is: Divine truth, therefore, which alone can discover to man the nature or qualities, as well as the will of God, is of infinitely more importance than all other truth: though truth in all its infinite diversity of forms may be traced to one original Source. Truth in its origin is the Word, or Wisdom, of God, which Word is the manifestation or form of God, by which He is described and seen; the Word, therefore, in the beginning was with God, and was God; and, since the written Word thence derived, in its inmost sense, treats solely of God, it, also, viewed in itself, is Divine.

Truth, in its purity, can relate only to goodness. It is the servant, or operating cause, to perform its work; its guide to lead man to it; its herald to proclaim it; its bosom friend in which it delights; it is the touchstone by which its properties are tried, known, and brought to light. Truth is all that God speaks to man relative to what is Divine, and to the way in which man should walk; and, in a subordinate sense, truth is all that man speaks while he continues faithful to the Word of God. When man keeps the commandments, he leads a life of truth;

when he loves the commandments, he leads a life of goodness: thus truth, sent forth from goodness, which originates in God Himself, returns to its Source. Truth, therefore, is the bright mirror, the manifested form, and the oracle of God.

On the Power of Retaining Truth.

THAT a man of a confirmed evil life should hate Divine truth, is the outcome of the very nature of evil. Truth discovers to him his own hideous form. If from the memory only he views it, he does so with oblique or half-averted eyes: he considers truth as a tiresome monitor, always finding fault, and always imposing a task: and, if the early impressions on his memory did not retain some indelible record of its precepts, he would totally shut his mind against it. When remorse follows guilt, it is at first the offspring of fear: if, however, there is a degree of acknowledgment that what has been done was wrong, accompanied by a degree of self-condemnation, it is the first dawn of the mind's reform, and is a faint earnest of future obedience. When truth from the memory is confirmed in the understanding, out of regard to its excellence and importance, there is a further advancement in the admission of truth. In this stage, when the propensities to evil recur, they are condemned; until affection, or the will, by insensible degrees, first espouses the cause of truth,

and afterwards that of goodness. After this, anxiety and pain never cease to accompany the commission of evil, even in its slightest visible operations. As the new will is more and more confirmed, and its affections gather strength, evil is successively resisted and put away; and, when it occasionally returns, it becomes more and more intolerable. In proportion as the will acquires settled habits of goodness, its love of truth develops and increases, and it enjoys more and more frequent returns of tranquillity and peace.

Truth has no real abiding place with man until it is received into his affections. It then operates in his life, and increases by new and unending acquisitions. It is the food by which his growing spiritual life is sustained. There have been instances of brilliant attainments in truth, when only the love of fame, or of gain, or of rule and pre-eminence, have presided in the will; but, in such cases, the acquisitions are flighty, and not solid. Let attentive observation keep watch, and falsehoods will ere long be but too visible; and then the truths which these displace will vanish like falling stars, or will expire like flowers cut off from their parent roots. The light of truth, without the love of it, is as a transient meteor, and its apparent flame is but an *ignis fatuus*. As the body without the soul is dead, so truth without a genuine affection for it is a mere carcass.

On the Life of Truth and the Life of Goodness.

THE life of truth is a life of obedience ; and the life of goodness is a life of love. The life of truth receives and acknowledges the commandments, and is in the constant endeavour to abide by their rule, in opposition to many counteracting propensities : it is therefore a life of much labour and combat ; but, in the degree that it is also a victorious life, it progressively advances to the life of goodness, which is the establishment of the commandments in the heart, or in the soul's delight. In the degree that goodness becomes the leading principle, the warfare ceases. Evil, having lost its lure, ceases to charm and to divide the mind. During the life of truth, the understanding often reproves the untoward will, and temptations and desolations abound ; but the life of goodness is a spontaneous rejection of evil, as the palate rejects unpleasant food, the eye unpleasant prospects, and the smell offensive vapours : the will acts instinctively, and the understanding afterwards

confirms. In the former life, the understanding teaches, and the will, sometimes with pleasantness, and sometimes with reluctance, obeys. During the life of truth, the activity of two opposite wills is sensibly perceived: the new will from the Lord acquiesces, and the old will, not yet subdued, frequently rebels. During the life of truth, faith distinguishes qualities, and occasions clearness of vision of those things which are afterwards brought into fruition by the life of goodness.

Concerning the Internal Word, its Advantages and Effects.

WHEN the affections, in conjunction with the understanding, are introduced to the internal Word as at this day revealed, and the life corresponds to its dictates, man, as to his spirit, becomes an inhabitant of the heavenly kingdom, and feels that he is but a sojourner upon earth. When he contemplates the order and beauty of the heavenly kingdom, as described by the messenger of the new dispensation, he gains a clear view of the surpassing delights of eternity, compared with which those of time are seen to be as nothing. He beholds a world where the spiritual form, the investiture of a free spirit, can roam at large, free from the limitations of space, carrying within itself the heaven which it inhabits. To the prepared Christian it is a heartfelt privilege, while he remains in the present world, to enjoy the certainty of soon leaving it. Friends and acquaintances daily fall around us. Death carries on an unrelenting warfare against our perishable material

forms. But we may with tranquil delight view each token of their decay ; because death is no more than the throwing off of the material covering which was provided only for the first budding forth of our existence.

By the internal Word we are presented with a more sublime view of the infinite love of the Deity, and of the more refined operations of charity : we perceive, in its light, the true nature of genuine faith, which, without charity, is but a name : in its light, also, the Trinity (seen to be comprised in the Person of the manifested Saviour—the Jehovah who was to appear upon earth), ceases to distract the mind by the false conception of three distinct Persons in the Godhead ; which, by confusing the understanding, and involving the mind in a cloud of insuperable difficulties, has for centuries estranged the Church from the true knowledge and worship of God.

By a clearer and fuller idea of God and His attributes, we are brought nearer to Him ; our worship becomes more animated, and our love more ardent ; and, from our increased love of God, our charity will become more active and extensive, and our self-examination more watchful and more refined. The satisfaction of doing good, to which we are led by numberless means, while our constant attention is to shun evil, will be renewed with every

rising sun. The hours of retirement will be sweetened with heavenly contemplation ; and the busy hours of life, though oppressed with many uncongenialities, will be patiently sustained. Everything imparts a blessing when all things have their use ; and all things have their use when God is in all our thoughts. The tendency of those thoughts in which God is, is always to our neighbour's good, either nearly or remotely. Anxieties which darken the mind, and temptations which excite despondency, will ultimately confirm our dependence upon Divine Providence ; and this will gradually enable us to rise above our trials and temptations, until at last our inward peace becomes permanently established. The Lord's words, which in themselves are "spirit and life," become little more than a dead letter, when the mind, by yielding too much to worldly principles, becomes restless and untranquil. But when the Lord is in the "holy temple" of our renewed affections, thoughts, and inmost desires, all the earth of our natural mind will keep silence before Him, and we shall be directed on our way.

On Scientifics.

GENERAL and common scientifics or knowledges, acquired in early life and progressively improved, are the recipient vessels of spiritual things; and they become vivified and enlightened by spiritual truths in the degree that these are illustrated and warmed by charity. Celestial and spiritual truths, when opened and expanded by the genuine affection of truth, will flow into scientifics, and discover in them many beautiful correspondences, which, like so many mirrors, will reflect Divine things. But let not the man of science attempt to open and unlock, by means of mere external knowledge, the fountain of wisdom in the Divine Word; for this is contrary to order, and the ineffectual exertions of his self-will will soon be manifested in the fruitlessness of his labour. Such activities will soon exhibit to view the pride of intellectual attainment, darkened by the mist of error. Self will be seen to be the centre of his exertions, and their end to obtain an acknowledged superiority over his neighbour. There will be an actual desire of rule,

blended with an apparent desire of good ; and the uses of the mental faculties will become perverted to selfish purposes, instead of being continually exercised in their devout application to the treasures of the Divine Word. Such a mind will busy itself with the curious devices of novelty ; with inventions that may excite wonder and admiration ; with cold and lifeless investigations ; and, this being the case, it cannot rise into states of true spiritual intelligence ; but, like the flying-fish, drops into its own native element, from that purer one into which it had vainly expanded its feeble wings.

On Conversation.

PART I.

CONVERSATION is calculated to recreate, as well as to improve the mind. By the privilege of speech we can communicate the spontaneous productions of thought, and can talk of subjects the most interesting to our own and our neighbour's happiness. We can not only speak upon such topics as the varieties of every day may suggest, at the same time imparting to them a moral and refining tendency; but, by the aid of Divine Revelation, carrying our ideas beyond the limits of time, we may render our discourse interesting even to attendant angels. What pity is it, then, that so many hours, days, and nights should by thousands be spent in the most frivolous pursuits, such as fill the mind with vain and trifling ideas, serving to excite every disorderly passion, and to lay the foundation of untimely disease and death! Pageantry is called forth to support pride, till there is a rivalry in excess. In the glaring splendour of the midnight scene, the mind, as well as the body, is deprived

of rest ; and if all were to retire from it who feel, but will not own their disgust, but few comparatively would remain to keep up the farce of an artificial delight which palls upon the appetite of its votaries.

But, turning from the haunts of intemperance, dissipation, and folly, where conversation is reduced to the merest ravellings of thought, we might surely expect far superior entertainment with those who have long professed their predilection for rational enjoyments from a religious source. Here again, however, we are often disappointed : the conversation often becomes desultory ; the ideas that flow from the sacred fountain of Divine Revelation are listened to for a moment, and then dispersed, to give way to an allusion to some trifling incident, or to the record of some dull fact, which the natural mind will doat on, as if the prospects of eternity were less interesting than those of time ; the varieties of infinitude more circumscribed than the trifling scenery of the day ; and the soul's essential happiness of less importance than the fleeting delights of the body. Thus it frequently happens that the purpose of social religious meetings is interrupted and drawn aside by the intrusion of subjects of little moment. The hours slip away unimproved that were intended to be far differently used : whereas, were only a few friends to meet, with minds open to eternal views, and hearts won

over to eternal interests, continued and varied satisfaction would arise from animated communications on sublime and useful subjects ; and such intercourse would infuse a serene stillness into the mind, elevating its enjoyments, and furnishing on the morrow calm and pleasing reflections, such as the spiritual mind stands in need of, to counteract the troubles and disappointments of each succeeding day. By frequent conversations among a few such friends, during the hours of evening, the mind is buoyed up and kept in its proper element ; it is refreshed with returns of gratitude to the Divine Providence ; it is expanded with neighbourly love ; and it becomes more and more fitted for heaven.

On Conversation.

PART II.

WHEN the mind is in a state of freedom, it will resort, in its conversations, to subjects which are most accordant with its affections and views ; and when, from a variety of causes, impediments prevail, it will feel more or less disappointment : and sometimes, from being denied opportunities of introducing such a turn of conversation as it delights in, and from being forced to attend to what is not only uninteresting but wearisome, it will sink into a state of torpor, and remain almost without ideas.

From the subjects of conversation which a man prefers, and to which he is spontaneously led of his own free choice, he may form a just and clear determination of the quality of his affections, and of the ruling affection to which every other is subservient. Thus the man whose ruling affection begins and ends in the boundaries of his estate, or his earthly property, will insensibly turn to the objects of his delight, and will talk much of worldly possessions ; the poli-

tician, if he cannot carry his thoughts a little higher than the affairs of this world, will incessantly dwell on the forms and changes of government, more especially if he bears a part in them ; the man of wealth as well as power, who delights in them, will be found habitually in a train of thought that favours the worship of his idols ; the mere disputant will find an unfailing field for controversy in politics, in civil, religious, or any other subjects: his ruling love being that of control, instead of promoting harmony, he will delight in a state of warfare, exciting his adversary to opposition, and aiming more at triumph than at truth.

Researches after truth are sober and calm ; not violent, but conciliatory. The lover of truth endeavours to collect the scattered rays of light, and to bring his subject into clearness: the disputant frequently ends his conversation by leaving all things in doubt, darkness, and confusion.

The man of literature, whose ruling passion is the attainment of knowledge, is qualified to strew his way with flowers,—to be at once amusing and instructive, provided his attainments are adorned with a manner that is unassuming and condescending, and he continually bears in mind that the end of all human learning is the improvement of moral excellence, and a more humble adoration of the Deity. Without re-

ligion, learning will lead to spiritual ignorance, as well as to pride and infidelity; since the peasant who knows the laws of God and obeys them is truly wiser than the learned man who questions, doubts, and disobeys.

The heaven-taught mind alone can give to conversation its greatest weight and truest interest. Practised in the true estimation of temporal as compared with eternal things, the true Christian, in his elevated views, will seek his inheritance in immortality, and will accommodate himself to the quick succession of events that occur from day to day, whether prosperous or adverse, relying on the control of Infinite Wisdom, which is ever at work for the completion of human happiness. In society he will vary his subjects of conversation, and suit them to the occasion, and to the minds of individuals; but he will gladly seize on every fair opportunity of attracting the powers of reason to the laws of revelation, and of bringing the ideas, thoughts, and conversation of men on earth into the order and harmony of heaven.

On our Intercourse with the World.

WHAT is life that has death in it? and what are temporal pursuits when separated from eternal views? They are not only fleeting, but also delusive shadows! In the degree that we acquire the life of truth, everything that is false will excite aversion: in the degree that we love goodness, evil will be held in abhorrence. Such being the nature of all things that are opposite in form and essence, the spiritual mind cannot without sensible pain apparently blend with worldly minds, in whom all things oppose the order which it has adopted, bringing confusion on all its arrangements, and offering it “ashes for beauty.” Doubtless that kind and unerring Providence which has opened to our view the fountain of truth, and enabled us to partake of many an exhilarating draught of the waters of life, will not lead us to the shallow streams of the waters of bitterness oftener than may be requisite for our advancing spiritual states. The bitter waters which the children of Israel met with in the wilderness were rendered sweet by casting wood into them; and so will the bitter waters, of which we so often complain

be rendered palatable, when goodness, to which wood corresponds, has blended with them its benign qualities. If we watch our opportunities, when mixing with the world, we shall find many good purposes to promote. Even to the laughter of inconsiderate mirth, which often leagues with mischief, we may administer some happier turn of thought than could proceed from severity or ridicule. At the luxuriant feast, if mindful of temperate restraint, we may season the repast with something at least remotely good,—some observations of moral tendency, some anecdote to show the deformity of vice or the beauty of excellence: without breaking the current of conversation, we may strive imperceptibly to bend it into something savouring of order, of beauty, of benevolence, of nature, of reason, and of God: we may smother the tale of scandal in an allusion to the conspicuous merit of some living character: by being politely attentive without falling into flattery, and by courteously lending an ear to things that we know to be erroneous, or that may merely be uninteresting, we may, in turn, excite more notice to our own remarks, wherein we may discreetly introduce topics of a character useful for the purposes of eternity, as well as of time. When we return to our own homes, we shall then have something cheering to recollect: and even should opportunities of so acting have been

denied us, as they sometimes will, owing to the effusions of irrational mirth or of contending politics, if we have had the will so to do, we shall at least be able to look back to our conscious good purpose, and to our prudent silence; and the pain of uncongeniality which we bring home with us will, in that case, be greatly mitigated, and will quickly subside. But if we have not only been unguarded in our conduct, but have yielded to the vague delights of the natural mind; if we have forgotten those treasures which the spiritual mind has in store, and for hours have eagerly preferred the shadow to the substance; if we have fanned the flame of folly; have fed the sensual appetite; have enlisted for awhile as disciples of noisy, inconsiderate mirth, or of too pointed raillery; or have heard the irreligious insinuation without a becoming check; when we return home the pain and reproach we shall feel will arise more from the life into which we have been ensnared, than from the temporary privation of our own better delights. In this case we must humble ourselves with the prodigal son, before we can again sit down as a guest to our accustomed spiritual feast:—we must shake off the natural life which has seduced us, before we can return to the spiritual life which has, happily, charmed us beyond all possibility of its extinction.

Let us, therefore, when invited to social intercourse

with the world, endeavour to be guarded against its seductions. The "celestial" mind cannot be seduced, but lives secure in its own ethereal element; it cannot descend to inferior objects without being surrounded with its own atmosphere, which is fully receptive of the divine influence: but the "spiritual" mind, exposed to varying affections of what is heavenly above and earthly beneath, in the weakness of its progress often partakes, as it were, of an amphibious nature: its views are frequently at variance with its attractions: its understanding explores with eagle eye the heavenly kingdom, while its new will lends wings to aid its flight; but the old unregenerate will would fain draw it down to earth again, and blend together irreconcilable properties. Let us watch, therefore, against evil, in order that good may become more and more permanent in its influence, securing us against the charms of fancy, and the fruitless wishes of a restless mind, which, under a veil of illusion, will offer to us "quails" for "manna." Let us proceed with diffident and humble caution; with a constant desire, and unceasing prayer, to be directed on our way; and then we may rest assured that Divine Providence will protect us while we are in association with the world, and will ultimately wean us from its influence, as we become more and more matured for heaven.

On the Love of God and the Love of the Neighbour.

IF we love God, we shall love His laws and dispensations; we shall love not only His gifts, but His chidings also, which are indeed the marks of His tenderest love. If our self-will were not often checked, controlled, and drawn by a strong hand from its course, it would remain for ever in a perverted state. Our pursuits, our attachments, our hopes, our fears, our triumphs, and our very sighs, must all be rectified, and acquire a new and heavenly order. The tenor of the Christian's life, notwithstanding occasional inward trials and outward afflictions, is sweetened with intervals of peace. He enjoys a simplicity of heart, a serenity of conscience, an equality of temper, a lively confidence, and a humble resignation.

To love God is to love goodness in every form and in every degree, and to seek to promote it by every possible means, and to shun evils of every kind as obstacles to its progress. To love our neighbour is to love to seek his well-being and happiness, more especially by promoting his spiritual welfare, by good

counsel, and by kindness, according to his state. We should travel lightly and pleasantly with him, and not tire him by leaning too heavily upon him with our own anxieties. By bearing our own burdens patiently, and by endeavouring to relieve those of others, we shall gradually wax strong in the Lord, to find His yoke easy, and His burden light.

In the most ancient church, charity was classed into a variety of distinctions, and exercised accordingly; but at this day we seem to understand very little even of its most general operations. The true love of our neighbour is an imitation of the love of God to us: it is beneficent, disinterested, forgiving, compassionate: it seeks to set the purposes of others right by good counsel and by kindness; and finds its own enjoyment in the happiness of others which it thus promotes.

To love God truly, we must love both the hand that gives and the hand that takes away,—the hand that oppresses, that relieves, that elevates, and that confounds. To love our neighbour truly, we must love him with all his faults without loving his faults; we must take him as he is, and increase our love as he increases in goodness. If he is capable of listening to counsel, we must advise for the best: and if he is abandoned, we must pray for him, and never forget the general law of charity, which extends to all mankind.

On Charity.

PART I.

THE good offices of charity, in their minute and extensive operations, are known to the Lord alone ; and it is only in proportion as selfish and worldly loves are subdued that we become open to the influence of this Divine emanation from the Lord, and can become acquainted with the celestial science of its operations and effects.

To find our happiness in promoting the happiness of others is a striking contrast to the seeking our happiness in the subserviency of others. The former disposition engenders humility, brotherly kindness, tenderness, and compassion ; a perpetual desire, in forgiving injuries, to rectify the deformed and erring propensities in which they originate, and to hold out to all the distinctions between false and true happiness, and mildly to invite and persuade them to the best choice. On the contrary, to seek our happiness in the subserviency of others engenders pride, haughtiness, discontent, dissatisfaction, and even cruelty ;

and the setting out upon wrong principles must ever prove abortive to its purpose.

Genuine charity, in its operations, is imaged by the miracles which our Lord performed upon earth. It gives light to the blind who are in the darkness of error ; it opens the deaf ear to attend to Divine things ; it helps the feeble, and assists the lame to walk ; it raises those who are dead in worldly and selfish love to the life of heaven : unbelievers alone, who slight its report and turn from its aid, lose all the benefit of that instrumentality which the Lord has appointed for it. Charity gives a new current to that sensibility which, in early life, some are so prone to idolize, not aware that its refinements are often the secret ministers of self-love. Instead of being tender for itself, and subtle in the contrivance of its own gratifications, the heaven-born sensibility of charity is tender for others, cautious not to provoke, unwilling to give offence, mild in persuasion, and patient in bearing with the prejudices, perversions, and gross views of the natural mind. If it cannot accomplish any good purpose on untractable dispositions, it retires, and waits a better opportunity : but to the mind that is receptive it opens its treasures, —not to dazzle, but to invite,—communicating first its general or more common good things, and reserving its pearls and its gold for the last.

On Charity.

PART II.

CHARITY does not require of us to judge so favourably of others as to see things through a false medium, and call evil good: for genuine charity and truth are ever in union; and in the degree in which charity is derived from and elevated to the supreme love of the Lord, the spiritual perception becomes clearer, and freer from the clouds either of prejudice or partiality. It is as little the office of charity to flatter as to offend. To encourage with the warmth of approbation what is good, and calmly, but firmly, to oppose what is evil, are equally consistent with the character of true benevolence. Among the spiritual acquaintances that we may form, we shall sometimes find ourselves much disappointed, and sometimes find that we have been deeply deceived. And, just as the spiritual affections will grow stronger towards every apparent degree of increasing goodness in our friend or companion; so, in like manner, will they weaken at its apparent decline.

In the most righteous of human judgments we can only judge from appearances. The Lord alone knows the thoughts and secret intentions of the heart. Suppose, then, that a friend, to whom our attachment has been firm for years, should discover unsuspected principles of decidedly evil tendency, and a course of conduct that we cannot but think irreconcilable with the professions that first won our regard : it is surely, in such a case, both just and rational to lessen our intimacy ; though this should be done gradually, and with a cautious and almost unwilling scrutiny : but when the circumstances that have shaken our confidence have been repeatedly and clearly proved, we are then at liberty to be more distant in our demeanour. But we should still advise when we can ; and we must always hope, even to the end, since the case, whatever it may be, is in the hands of Providence. Let us not attempt to give a false gloss to what is manifestly wrong ; still less let us delight to dwell on a subject of real regret which we cannot relieve. In a confidential conversation we must not prevaricate ; but there is no occasion to anticipate the censure of the world, or to add to its severity. The mind may take its own distinct views, and act accordingly ; but, except with those friends who participate in our regret, and who maintain the same tenor of good-will, there is much eligible safety in silence.

Charity will ever be kept alive by a deep and habitual sense of our own imperfections : and though we cannot but retire from the man who makes religion a stalking horse, we may nevertheless hope that there may be a spark of vital essence even in so crude a form, and that the professor who is so religious in word will at length out-talk himself, and be ashamed, in some silent hour, of a mimicry from which he can derive no substantial good.

Charity can never live with false pretence. It will offer its purest and most precious principles, only when this can be done with the promise of success ; and it will consider what methods are best suited, and may be most successfully adopted, to promote general and individual good consistently with the laws of harmony and peace, with which it delights to dwell.

On the Happiness of a State of Order.

WERE mankind fully convinced that the Supreme Being who created them can alone accomplish for them the purpose for which they were created,—which is, their eternal happiness, to begin on earth, and to be perfected in heaven,—they would listen to those laws which revelation has made known to them for its attainment, considering them as laws whose end it is, not to deprive them of real blessings and comforts, but gradually to confer them with everlasting increase. Instead of a surrender of the mind and its affections to the Divine laws, and instead of persevering in the road which the finger of God has pointed out to them, men, like untoward children, prefer to wander through woods and forests, delighted with unknown tracts, and exposed to briars and thorns, to the poisonous berries of self-love, and to the envenomed bite of serpents and reptiles of the most noxious kind. Such, indeed, are the various unrestrained passions,—the continual tormentors of those who, overpassing the mark of temperance in

worldly enjoyments, lose that sweet relish which a moderate participation of them, under the control of heavenly principles, can alone impart. It would be as easy for a tree to thrive with its root in the air and its branches in the ground, as for a man to attain genuine happiness by quitting his proper centre in God, and by burying in earthly pursuits the fruit-bearing blossoms of a mind which has been organized for celestial contemplation, and for the purest moral practice.

Let us, for a moment, fancy a small society of truly rational beings, whose minds are enlightened from the fountain of wisdom in the Divine Word, and who, in the true worship of the heart, love God above all things, in the natural, moral, and spiritual order in which they delight to move ; whose wants are easily supplied, because they are content with little ; and who, from a principle of active goodness, the offspring of their supreme love of the Lord, are ever watchful to contribute something to promote the well-being of their neighbour ; who meet to converse a little about their worldly concerns, and much about the enlivening prospects of eternity ; who are enamoured of truth, because by truth they find out the operations of goodness, in which they delight to engage ; and who, amidst a world far differently disposed, patiently wait the lapse of a few years, which shall pass away

as a dream, knowing that they then shall resuscitate with immortal youth in bodies not subject to decay, but which, like the soul which animates them, shall become more and more perfected to all eternity. In such a society envy, hatred, malice, deceit, pride, and selfishness could find no admittance; but humility, kindness, condescension, and every reciprocal act of genuine charity, would be ever manifested in a variety of forms, having a constant tendency to promote inward peace, even in the bosom of those who were undergoing outward trials. Individually giving glory to God for piloting their feeble barks through the storms and tempests which man's perverted free agency has brought on to the ocean of time, the members of this happy community would pursue their blissful course until safely landed on the eternal shores, where heavenly order, and increasing felicity, shall bury in sweet oblivion the remembrance of the perils through which they have passed.

On Self-Examination.

SELF-EXAMINATION is practised, in the early stages of regeneration, as a duty enforced by self-compulsion, the expediency of which is seen and felt, in order that we may discover our latent and prevailing evils, together with all the false defences which the natural mind will frequently set up. By laying open our manifold imperfections of heart and mind, self-examination will lead to humiliation, and this to adoration of the Lord, and to a constant endeavour to imitate His perfections. It is a duty which the natural mind thinks not of, for the reason that its views continually converge to self-elevation. The natural mind labours to become great in the possession of the kingdoms of this world, and cannot endure the idea of becoming little for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. But as the mind becomes enlarged by spiritual views, it begins to think little of the world, and more of heaven; and by the instruction of the Sacred Word it is taught in what consists that fitness which can qualify it for the enjoy-

ment of that future state of happiness for which the merely natural mind has no relish. As the spiritual life advances, self-examination, which was at first imposed as a duty, and often obeyed with reluctance, becomes more and more spontaneous. Every day furnishes a more distinct view of its occurrences, and, as it were, sits in judgment on itself. The words and actions of others do not pass unobserved, but our minute and severe scrutiny is over our own : for it has to be remembered that, although the motive and general tendency of the spiritual mind is to shun evil and to promote good, its motives and ends are frequently interrupted by counteracting principles in the natural mind. The love of self and the world, though weakened, is not subdued ; and its influence is often discovered, by habitual observation, in a thousand subtle forms.

Nothing leads to spontaneous self-examination more directly than the frequent and devout contemplation of the Lord in His wonderful works of Creation, Redemption, and Providence, in which He displays His infinite mercy and goodness. This, by letting in the rays of heaven's sun, will discover to us the dark spots in our own characters ; and, while it thus increases our humility, it will lead us to a kind and merciful consideration of the faults and imperfections of our neighbour.

On the Necessity of acquiring a Mild and Gentle Spirit, as the Genuine Test of the Operation of the Internal Word on the Affections and Life.

IN the writings of Swedenborg we find the following passages, to which many more to the same purpose might be added:—

“Truth from goodness is soft and gentle ; falsehood from evil is hard and fierce ; hence the origin of hard and bitter speeches” (*A. C.* 6359).

“Every natural affection, as it ascends towards interior principles, or towards heaven, becomes milder, and at length is changed into a heavenly affection” (*A. C.* 3909).

“As sound which is on high, where the atmosphere is more pure, is tacit, but when it descends to the inferior or more dense atmosphere, is louder and more sonorous ; so Divine truth and Divine good are in their elevated state pacific, and altogether undisturbed, but when they fall to lower degrees they

grow unpacific, and at length tumultuous " (*A. C.* 8823).

"Goodness of disposition manifests itself by gentleness and sweetness; by gentleness, in that it is afraid to do hurt; and by sweetness, in that it loves to do good" (*Pla. Jup.* 50).

The life of our Lord upon earth was the most perfect pattern of mildness and of gentleness. When His disciples would have brought down fire from heaven to consume their adversaries, He mildly rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." When they seemed disposed to desert Him, He made this affectionate appeal to them, "Will ye also go away?" When Peter had thrice denied Him, "He looked on him, and Peter remembered His words." Under the pangs of crucifixion He prayed for His murderers with His dying breath.

The spirit of violence, of impatience, of impetuosity, of pre-eminence, of the love of dominion from the love of self, is the very spirit of Antichrist, whatever softer name may be given to it by insidious evil spirits. Zeal is the apology they constantly supply for the disorder which they unceasingly create. This false and intemperate zeal induced Peter to draw his sword. John had not less zeal, who lay on his Saviour's bosom, and whose mild and persevering endeavour was to win men to His love. It is the

common practice of intemperate zeal to sour the minds of men by vociferous and violent argument. This will often prevent them from seeing the truth, just as the constant presentation of it in battle array will prevent its being received by their affections.

So to conduct ourselves as to endeavour to meet the apprehension of others, and to court it by a genuine display of the mild and orderly operation of truth on ourselves, is the way of true wisdom.

In offering truth, we should be able to show the good to which it has led in ourselves; and thus invite others to seek and find the same good. Truth led on by worldly principles is loud, imperious, impatient, self-applauding, and triumphant; but when conducted by heavenly principles, it is candid, mild, patient, yielding, accommodating, engaging, and yet sincere and steadfast. The man who is actuated by heavenly principles will travel out of his way to bring the wanderer home; and if he cannot awaken his understanding, he will gradually strive to impress his heart by means of offices of charity, gentleness, and kindness. In the well-prepared mind the influx of heavenly truth is tranquil as the silent dew softly descending into a fleece of wool.

Do the disciples of the new dispensation meet for the delight of conversing on the sublime truths of the eternal Word, and do they suffer disputation and

discord to prevail? This would be to shut out the sun's rays, instead of showing their beauty in a prism ! Minds not in unison cannot hold communion upon themes of heavenly truth : they would form a concert without harmony. The love of truth cannot abide along with any form of selfishness or self-seeking.

Our surest remedy against a spirit of strife and contention will be found in constant prayer for strength to resist all disorderly tendencies of the mind and its affections ; in watchfulness against the first ebullition of anger, of restlessness, or of anxiety ; and in turning our thoughts on such occasions to heavenly things. We must furthermore every day go forth with a determination to be calm, moderate, and temperate ; to reflect more, and to speak less ; to dwell much on the truths of the living Word ; and to look more and more to the Lord. Such endeavours will doubtless be ultimately crowned with tranquillity and peace.

On the Delight of Gratitude.

THE essential delight of gratitude can be known only to the regenerate Christian, who from his heart acknowledges all things as gifts from God, not even excepting his privations and sufferings, which in their progress will unfold to him their hidden treasures. Gratitude is a never-failing source of delight, because it views every enjoyment as a blessing from Providence, whose goodness often overpowers the feeling heart. The regenerate mind sees in its own existence a source of eternal praise, and is deeply sensible that the Deity who gave life gave it for happiness, and, lest erring man should mistake his way, also gave him infallible laws and regulations for its attainment.

Contentment and gratitude are inseparable companions. The former shuts the door against anxieties, while the latter opens the gate of delight. Contentment occasions a peaceful calm, and gratitude a devout rejoicing,—a silent offering up of perpetual incense on the altar of the Giver of all good. The worldly mind,

centred in self, instead of looking upwards with adoration, looks downwards for distinction and subservience. It asks for more possessions in order to excite increasing homage ; and more and more it experiences a constant craving, which is accompanied by continual disappointment. On the contrary, gratitude to the Supreme Being never fails to induce benevolence towards man, together with an exquisite participation of the happiness which it promotes, from whence flows a rich stream of gratitude. Secure in its humble dependence, the grateful mind finds a temple of worship in the midst of the most fluctuating events, and in the deepest troubles it describes the tender mercies of its God.

That all Worldly Possessions and Attainments must end in Disappointment, if Temporal be not joined to Spiritual Views.

THAT this is an incontrovertible truth, the daily experience of the young, and the more mature and settled experience of the old, will amply confirm; and it can only be doubted by those who are lost, even to insanity, in temporal pursuits; and who, from an ardent love of the world, would fain disprove, what they every day lament,—that they are disappointed and unhappy. They have accustomed themselves to wear a mask till they cannot bear to go without it; and they would make others believe that they are possessed of that lasting gratification for which, in truth, they continually sigh. The soul, from its very nature, being immortal, can only be satisfied with immortal possessions. All things which begin and end with time are valueless in the estimation of the truly religious mind, except in the degree in which

they can be made subservient to eternal purposes. In themselves they are transient and perishing.

Honours, riches, pre-eminence and power, may all be rendered subservient to the cause of religion and virtue ; and in this new creation of their uses they may be pronounced "very good ;" but, considered in themselves, as they will come to nothing, so they are nothing. Ask the youth on whom religion and virtue have made some real impression in what estimation he holds his worldly pleasures and gratifications when he returns to his serious, silent, and monitory reflections, and he will candidly own that they are vain, delusive, and unprofitable ;—that, if he can find only one friend in the world who similarly estimates them, one of his truest satisfactions will be a frequent and an uninterrupted intercourse with him on more interesting and more elevated subjects. In his riper years he will confirm more and more the estimate made in his youth. His pursuit of virtuous attainments will become more steady, and more ardent, with his advancing years, till all his thoughts, words, and actions will have eternal purposes in them, and will serve at once to render him more and more useful here, and to prepare him for a better state hereafter.

Virtue is eternal ; and the mind which is so impressed with its dictates as to ardently practise them, lives in eternity even while dwelling in time ; and will

find time delightful in the degree in which it is seen to open the prospect of eternity. The mind that would shut out this prospect separates itself from religious virtue, and meets with incessant disappointment. It will not own the truth, because it does not love truth ; for truth leads to virtue, and virtue to eternal delight. Should the aged advise, their counsel is disregarded on the plea of their having outlived their enjoyments : though the truth is that the calm and sober satisfaction which virtue brings will increase up to the latest moment of life. Should the young advise, their observations are deemed of no account, on the ground that they are as yet unacquainted with the world. Thus is all admonition lost on the disciple of falsehood : and admonition slighted, is misery secured. Man was created for happiness, even in this world, but only according to the laws of happiness. From the breach of the Divine commandments, which are those laws of happiness, are derived all the innumerable forms of human misery with which we daily meet.

Those whose elevated affections, and upright intentions and conduct, open to them the cheering prospect of eternity, will find, in a humble dependence on the Divine Providence, the secret of soothing adversity, and of giving tenfold enjoyments to the swift career of time : while those who, either from aversion,

or from a cold disregard to religious instruction and practice, shut out the prospect of eternity, will not only have an eternity to dread, but will also inevitably deprive themselves, during their whole lives, of the true and heartfelt enjoyments of time.

On Temporal Prosperity when Subordinated to Eternal Virtus.

IT not unfrequently happens, in the course of Divine Providence, that when the mind of man, in the commencement of his regeneration, begins to be open to eternal views, his worldly supports are taken from him, sometimes gradually, sometimes suddenly and with apparent violence. This appears to be permitted in order that he may learn to look upwards, and find his support in the Lord alone; and also, that he may disentangle his affections from the world, and break all their bonds and affinities. At first such privations necessarily prove a severe trial to the new convert, who will often shrink from the trials of the wilderness, and will at times look back with regret to the sensual delights of his past Egyptian bondage. During the continuance of this state, were the days of his worldly prosperity to return, his worldly affections which are to be subdued would return with them; and hence it is

necessary that he should be kept in straitnesses of various kinds. Worldly means, however, are provided, according to his necessities, in various unexpected forms. A stranger hand will sometimes, like the raven to the prophet, bring him food. He will at times be sensible of the Divine Providence that sends him manna from heaven for his spiritual support ; and at other times he will loathe it, and sigh for quails. When he falls into company with worldly minds, he will be sometimes shocked and disappointed, and sometimes won over to his former delights : but in proportion as his spiritual mind is strengthened by privations, by outward trials and inward temptations, he will mix with the world with less danger, and will be able to regard its levities and amusements, so far as they are not criminal, in the light of children's play, ever reserving to himself his hidden satisfactions on which he delights to feed, and which he will venture to impart to others at prudent intervals and suitable opportunities. A ray of worldly prosperity, which previously would have dimmed the light of his spiritual mind, and darkened its views, may now serve to make them more luminous, by removing the shade of worldly cares and anxieties ; and thus enabling the free spirit, disencumbered of earthly cares, to take a wider range of heavenly view. The elevated affections of the heart being now instinctively taught,

like the bird of paradise, to live upon the wing, there is no danger of their settling upon earth. The Divine favours, in the spiritual or natural form, are now like grapes and figs from the promised land, and the triumphs of the humble regenerate mind are celebrated with devout joy and gratitude.

**On the Expediency, which is often experienced,
of a Straitness in Worldly Possessions
and Enjoyments, for the Advancement
of our Progress in Spiritual Life.**

AFTER the understanding has been enlightened, and the affections have begun to receive new life from the Divine Word, the unregenerate will-principle of man, which must at length be completely subdued, occasionally submits and occasionally prevails. When a man has placed himself under the influence of the Divine will, a new order takes place, which is, at first, but faintly understood, and the old will frequently ensnares the understanding to condemn what it cannot comprehend.

A privation of worldly possessions and enjoyments, when a new-born charity has just begun to warm the heart ; and a fall into worldly difficulties, after worldly pursuits have been willingly parted with for the sake of the heavenly kingdom ; appears a counteracting rather than a meliorating process ; and we are often

apt to lament, in the bitterness of our anguish, that we cannot go to heaven by the way that we would choose. But during the infant stages of regeneration, while the first emotions of our charity are yet blended with lower principles, had we ample means for its external operation, are we sure that in the exercises of it there would be no triumph of self? Might we not often mistake the state of others, and by an ill-timed aid impede the trials which it may be needful for them to undergo? Would there be no danger for our temperance at the table of luxury? for our humility in the courts of pride? for our sincerity among flatterers? We know not whither great worldly means might lead us: and if, in the course of Divine Providence, we are deprived of them, it must assuredly be for our advantage here or hereafter. The dissipations of the world, into which we might be drawn, even when we proposed to avoid them, might deprive us of the benefit of interior trials and temptations to which a retired and forlorn state, arising from worldly privations, might introduce us. To learn to forgive injuries is more difficult than to bestow bounties; and injuries will abound when adversity prevails.

During seasons of adversity, also, many false friends, from whom it is expedient that we should be separated, will fall off like autumnal leaves. To prefer dependence to possession, relying on the Lord alone

in every effort that we make, is a state that we cannot arrive at till our usual supports are taken from us. It is not in a calm sea that the mariner's heart fails him, but in the trying tempest which defies his utmost skill. The world is at present in the very consummation of evil and false principles, and great are the advantages of often retiring from it by self-examination, and by seeking instruction from, and sweet repose in, the Divine Word.

The man of worldly prosperity, whose appetite has been awakened for spiritual things, will often yearn for a change in external circumstances. He grows weary of worldly subjects that are void of life. He returns to the festive board, but sickens at the repast. His worldly friends and acquaintances are again invited; but the inward affections mourn, while the external mind labours in vain to exert a cheerfulness which it cannot feel. His former delights now weigh upon him like heavy burdens, from which he knows not how to disengage himself; nor can he conjecture by what means such long-established connections are to be broken.—An unexpected misfortune takes place, which suddenly changes the scene; and, in the midst of surrounding difficulties, his free spirit begins to breathe a new atmosphere. But scarcely is he released from the bondage of Egypt, when he finds himself journeying in the trying wilderness; and as

he travels through it, his fainting heart will often recoil, and at times he will be brought to the very brink of despair, by being deprived at once of his worldly and his spiritual comforts. But let him strive to possess his soul in patience, in humble dependence upon the Lord; and in the hour of his greatest need he will receive manna from heaven and water from the rock. He will find them both in the Word of Life; and with them he will enjoy that fit measure of worldly comforts which the Lord alone knows, and will not fail to provide; until at last he arrive at "the land that floweth with milk and honey,"—his eternal abode in the heavens, where his tears shall be turned into joy, and all his cares into the delightful rest of heavenly uses for ever.

On Voluntary Privations.

WE are never so much disposed to have consideration for others, as when we impose on ourselves voluntary privations, and never so little, as when we extend our self-indulgences ; although to many the reverse of this may seem to be the case. The reason is, that by restraining our own selfish enjoyments we weaken the power of self-love, which, the more it prevails, the more it weakens the power of neighbourly love. The limitation of our external enjoyments within due bounds will always prove the surest means of heightening those that are rational and spiritual ; and the crown of all these is charity, in its disinterested and elevated purposes of adding to the happiness of our neighbour. The man whose sensual and degraded delight is the accumulation of wealth, will think very little sufficient for those who are in want ; and that little he will deal out with a very sparing hand. The voluptuary, at the price of any inconvenience to others, will bring the pleasures of life, many of them falsely so called, into his own net.

He will oft, indeed, beggar his family, to increase his own personal gratifications. But he who, amidst the natural enjoyments of time, can contemplate an eternity to come, and will direct his thoughts and affections to worthy objects, and, above all, to the attainment of that fitness for a future state which is his unalienable inheritance, will consider the love of God, in the order which His precepts enforce, and the love of his neighbour, in all its duties and relationships, as the highest attainment of an immortal being, and will be content with little in his journey to the happier country.

On the Divine Providence.

THAT the course of the Divine Providence is inscrutable, is a truth that finds easy admittance into those minds which are in the acknowledgment that all the acts of the Lord's Providence are combinations of His love, wisdom, and power, and that these, being infinite, must transcend human apprehension.

To rely, with humble and unshaken confidence, on the Divine Providence, is the highest privilege of a human being; since it is accompanied with inward peace, and serene, undisturbed happiness. But this happy state cannot be attained until the Divine precepts are engraved upon the heart, and operate spontaneously in the life. The activity of goodness, as a ruling principle, and the sweetness of dependence on the Supreme Control, go hand in hand. If the former relaxes, the latter becomes clouded. The affections, purposes, desires, thoughts, and even the ideas of thought, must be brought under the dominion of truth and goodness in union, and self-dependence

must be discarded, before a delightful sense of the Divine control and protection can be fully enjoyed. No wonder, then, that the fruition of this happy state, even with the regenerate, ebbs and flows.

Severe trials are permitted, to the end of our spiritual purification ; but it requires great advancement in the Christian life ere we can calmly and gratefully contemplate the footsteps of the Divine Providence through the medium of intense sufferings. The mind, oppressed by the tortured frame, will often shrink back ; will strive to be composed, and will own its inability. But it must wait for its cheering views and comforts, until Providence has passed by, and reveals to it a blessing which, if seen in its approach, in its unveiled splendour, might have dazzled and confounded. At such times, we should take shelter in the rock of faith, and be content, with Moses, that the hand of Omnipotence should overshadow us until His glory has passed by. A few scattered rays, while it retires, are all that feeble mortals can bear. The slightest revelation, then, of what Providence has done for us ought to be sufficient to overwhelm us with gratitude and astonishment. Should our sufferings, at any time, prove extreme, and such as human nature cannot but recoil from, we may be tempted to think our-

selves forsaken and forgotten by our Heavenly Father. But we shall still be sustained, if, following our Lord's example, in His hour of anguish, we cry from our hearts, "Father, not my will, but Thine be done!"

**On a settled Dependence on, and Trust in,
the Divine Providence.**

A DEPENDENCE on the Divine Providence, like every other attainment in the regenerate life, is gradual in its growth and variable in its operation. The black clouds that surround us in the earlier stages of our Christian warfare, and the new forms of difficulty and desolation by which we are tried, will occasion sad despondency, and sometimes even absolute despair; but by degrees we shall discover the Hand that lifts us up, and shall learn to confide in the Power which continually protects us, and enables us again and again to surmount the overwhelming billows, until at length we find ourselves secure in the Divine Word, as our spiritual lifeboat, which the threatening waves cannot overset. Were Providence to raise us up before we are sufficiently humbled by repeated desolations, we should most assuredly triumph in our own strength, and the natural mind, which had begun to be subdued, would regain its dominion, and prevent that self-annihilation

which is the only true test of our advancement in the spiritual life.

As our trust in the Divine Providence increases, and becomes habitual, all the circumstances of our life, of whatsoever kind they may be, will cause us with gratitude to look up to the Lord. For the smallest instance of prosperity we shall immediately give Him thanks. Under adverse circumstances our prayers will be as instantly offered up, that we may take a right course, and that, in due time, we may surmount the present or threatened danger or difficulty. The same Providence that was visible in each particular of the progress of our privations will be equally so in the wonderful and unexpected means of our support; and when the Hand of Providence has thus again and again been perceived in the varying circumstances of life, a more refined observation will ensue, and delight will be experienced in the course which the Lord takes with us; which course, for the whole world, we would not wish to alter. The affections, now elevated and purified, instead of calling on the reflecting intellect for support, and for a repetition of its former instructions, will urge it to witness those clearer views which affection, the fruit of holy experience, alone can unfold, until the understanding, from being the preceptor, becomes the pupil of the rectified will, and the reason confirms

what the heart, in its more copious and refined reception of heavenly influx, dictates.

A mature trust in the Lord can only exist in the degree in which self-dependence subsides, and this can only subside by privations, and by repeated trials, whereby the pure in heart are gradually taught, in all things, to see God.

On the Difficulty of attaining a settled and entire Trust in Providence.

WHEN worldly things go well with worldly minds, they are in good humour with Providence, and are willing to pay an apparent homage for the good things which they possess, and which they secretly hope to preserve, and increase, by their own independent endeavours. That this is the temper of worldly men in prosperity, is evident from their general conduct in adversity. They are then deprived of their apparent confidence ; for they cannot trust Providence in the dark. Still less can they suppose that Providence is equally kind in depriving us of our possessions, as in securing them to us. When all things prosper, they are willing to call their good fortune by the name of Providence ; but when their darling schemes miscarry, they examine and endeavour to find out the cause in something casual. The natural mind, in reality, has no belief in Providence ; but rather considers the world as being like a clock,

or some curious piece of mechanism, which, having been once wound up, is left to go by itself, and is subject to many contingencies. Far different are the views of the truly regenerate mind, which, from an affection for truth, and from the hope of being more and more firmly fixed in that good to which the eternal truth of the Word unerringly leads, sees God in all things. The rational mind, enlightened by revelation, clearly discerns that there could be no Providence if it did not exist equally in small things as in great, since great events are made up of small contingencies, and owe their unfoldings and progress to the latter, in like manner as trees grow out of and expand from their seed. The regenerate mind, in its interior views, takes as it were a microscopic view of the Divine Providence; and although even the celestial mind, in its most lucid states, can discover but a small part, comparatively, of that providential watchfulness and care which, viewed in itself, is infinite, it is nevertheless led into a perception of myriads of wonders, in beautiful and orderly display, which entirely evade the gross and confined vision of the natural mind.

The changes of state of the regenerating mind are, it must be allowed, so varied, during the progress of its spiritual pilgrimage, that its general acknowledgments are often obscured by partial doubts. The old will, ere it is parted with, often interrupts the progress

of the new : the former, whenever it prevails, opposes its sensations to the soul's spiritual aspirations and acknowledgments ; while the latter, in every moment of its influence, leads to unconditional submission to the Divine will. Until we arrive at this state, the sweet and peaceful dependence of yesterday on the Divine Providence may to-day be borne away by some new form of difficulty. The understanding, while undergoing its renovating process, requires to be led to the Divine Word, like a child to be taught ; and then it not only sees and acknowledges the Divine truths contained therein, all of which point to the eternal end of the Lord's providences, but it also delights in the prospect of new degrees of attainment in heavenly love on the part of the regenerating affections. When the new will prevails, it realizes those delights ; but so often as the old will returns, it deprives the mind of its tranquil states by demanding possession instead of dependence ; and, in its degraded concupiscence, it will often sigh for the delights which the rational mind had abandoned, and will excite a secret devotion to some golden calf, by seducing the understanding into conformity with its cry for "a little more comfort and a little less care."

The regenerated celestial mind, in possessing the Lord, possesses all things : it can derive comfort

from privation, and possession from dependence; and, like the bird of melody, can sweetly sing with its bosom on a thorn. It has received with the "white stone" a "new name;" and, from the union of goodness and truth from the Lord, it has acquired the permanency of heavenly peace. In proportion as it becomes more alive to God, it becomes more insensible to self. At times it can enjoy the harmony of social intercourse, and at times can find the most enlivening society even in solitude; for the affections of the celestial mind have intimate access to heavenly societies, whose mild influence at times it is able clearly to perceive. In the world, its constant, though invisible operation is to do good. It would requite all injuries by an endeavour to rectify the disorder that has given rise to them; and would, if possible, return all favours by a communication of its own delights. When power is denied, it enjoys its heavenly purpose; and when opportunity is given, it immediately goes forth into action.

Consolation offered to the Dying Christian.

DEATH is the gate of life ; since to die is to live for ever. It is the closing hour of all our worldly cares and anxieties, and the commencement of serene, undisturbed delight, and of eternal peace. It is the putting off of our perishable forms, with the frailties and diseases that wait upon them, in order that we may resuscitate, with the privileges of immortality, in forms that shall for ever go on perfecting in beauty, in proportion as our hearts and minds shall improve in the love of goodness, and in the order of truth. Celestial angels will delight to fan the flame of our virtue and wisdom, and to lead us to progressive degrees of improvement, through the boundless ages of eternity. To die, is to meet our beloved friends to part no more, assured, at the moment of our departure from this world, that those who are dear to us will soon follow. This world is but the cradle of our existence ; and He who gave us being best knows when it is fittest for us to be translated to a happier clime. When He calls us, shall we not

with cheerfulness obey His voice, while angels are hovering round our pillow, waiting to welcome us into our immortal existence ?

Our Lord resuscitated on the third day ; and the soul, which cannot die, shall, on being detached from its earthly imprisonment, awaken in the spiritual world to newness of life, endowed with a consciousness of its immortal powers, and will then be invited to pursue, by the instruction and example of surrounding happy spirits, every purpose of the Heavenly Father, throughout eternity, joyously perceptive of His greatness, as the Lord of Life, and Light, and Glory. Even in the splendour of His outward works we have in this world but faintly seen Him ; and even in the light of His Gospel we have only been able to view Him as through a glass, darkly. But in the immortal state, in the Divine light of an unsetting sun, we shall be favoured with a view of the radiance of infinitely more stupendous manifestations of His creative power and paternal care than have been visible here. This world has cost us many sighs, but surely these should cease when our brightest hopes are just beginning to be realized,—when the cloud is receding from our soul's vision, and the everlasting gates are opening to receive us !

On the Association of Angels.

AS angels reside in our good affections, and these are so frequently interrupted or overshadowed, it is not surprising that we are seldom made sensible of their presence. Nevertheless, at intervals we are made conscious of it, at such times as the mind is in the delight of good and useful purposes, or when reflection has brought it into a state of settled calm. On the other hand, when the purposes are disturbed or perverted by counteracting circumstances or uncongenial minds, and the thoughts are ruffled, it is often the signal for the approach of evil spirits, who are delighted to fan the flame of discord, or encourage gloomy and desponding ideas, and thus to cloud the spiritual sun,—that bright emanation in whose cheering rays we are made sensible that we live and move, and have a spiritual existence.

The approach of angelic spirits is inexpressibly sweet and calm : it restores all things to harmony and peace ; and, in breathing forth the purposes of goodwill, it tranquillizes the mind, and disposes it to the

silent offerings of gratitude and praise. Who that for an hour has felt the soft and enlivening association of angelic spirits would willingly indulge in any of the momentary delights of evil, which must drive away such pleasing associates, and introduce in their stead the dark, disorderly, and malignant crew whose delight is the destruction of human happiness? Angels cannot dwell with disorder in any form; whether envy, hatred, malice, uncharitableness, false pretence, or impure desire. To guard against these subtle foes requires perpetual watchfulness, and a firm resistance to all the bribes that self-love and the love of the world can offer. Besides these obstacles, there are others to surmount that are for the most part undefinable. Sickness, by detaching the mind from temporal things, will sometimes dispose it to interior views, and open to it delightful prospects of futurity; but at other times, the necessary attention to bodily complaints, as well as the sufferings themselves, will disappoint these interior views, and draw the mind's attention to the poor, weak citadel, in which the enemy seems to riot with increased violence and effect.

In the present state of the world, while the affections have to combat with hereditary evils, and the body with a morbid inheritance; while regeneration sometimes appears to be steadily advancing, and at

other times seems to be falling off into a retrograde motion ; we cannot expect a permanent state of the fruition of the society of angelic visitants. Much, however, may be done to solicit their more frequent visits, and their longer stay. Let us carefully arrange the subjects of our thoughts and pursuits, buoying them up by connecting them with eternal views. Let every evening prove a comment on the past day. When our sensations are in heavenly delights, let the intellect repose, and when they are obscured, let it bring the treasures of the Word to our aid. When we seem to be without uses, let us study the more to avoid evils, and we shall be sure, in the Lord's good time, to be brought into some happy field of usefulness. Should Providence seem to forsake us, let us seek Him in His promises : our spiritual enemies cannot long endure the sacred pages : let us patiently wait, and the morning will return.

The Delights of Constancy, and the Delights of Variety.

THE delights of constancy, and the delights of variety, may at first sight appear to be in opposition to each other; while, in reality, they are so closely united that the one cannot exist except in dependence on the other, any more than a flower can flourish unless united to its root. The sun is constant in his rising, and all nature teems with abundance and variety through his instrumentality: and, similarly, our enjoyment of every real rational comfort depends on our constancy in the adoration of the great First Cause. Whenever we turn from that Fountain of happiness, every enjoyment sickens and dies, even as flowers die when cut off from their parent roots.

In the marriage state there can be no true felicity but what is built on the constancy of unanimity and fidelity. Two rational minds, loving, and thinking, and working in unison, are capable of producing end-

less varieties of mutual delights,—by an interchange of kind offices and attentions ; by the education of children ; by the charms of conversation ; and by varied pursuits ; but so soon as the constancy of harmony and fidelity fails, the blossom of happiness dies.

On the State of Marriage in the Spiritual and Celestial Church.

THE marriage state may be traced, in the sacred order of its appointment, to its Divine Source, in the united love and wisdom of the Lord, and thence in the conjunction of the Lord with His Church, or with created minds in a state of heavenly order. Every individual in whom these principles are united is spiritually married, whether or not he may have found his appointed partner upon earth.

Woman, by creation, is more especially the organized form of affection or love ; and man of intellect or wisdom.

In the *spiritual* church or state, the husband represents, and, viewed abstractedly, is, truth progressively advancing to goodness : the wife represents, and essentially is, the love of that truth or progressive wisdom ; and she heightens the affection of her partner towards her in the degree that she loves the wisdom which he pursues and unfolds.

In the *celestial* church or state, when truth has reached its destination in goodness, or the supreme love of the Lord, the wife, elevated to the same love, no longer represents the love of man's wisdom ; but becomes the more beautiful form, manifestation, or truth, of his love. In the prior state, the husband loved the representative form of the affection of the wisdom which he sought : in the latter state, he is more strongly attracted to the more beautiful representation of the form of his love. Thus is the affection of each celestial partner exalted by an organization out of itself, in the person of its loved one ; and thus, also, is obtained a more delightful perception of the Supreme Love, from which true conjugal love is an emanation.

Thus, during the *spiritual* marriage state, self-love will be more and more sweetly lost in mutual love ; until, at last, in the *celestial* state, mutual love itself will be still more sweetly lost, in a conscious and blessed participation of the Supreme Love.

On the Lord's Prayer.

PART I.

PRAYER is communion with God ; and, in the degree that we are ardent and sincere in our devotion, it is a kind of revelation ; for, the affections being laid open to heavenly influence by devout prayer, celestial light and heat are communicated from the Lord. Were it not for prayer, which brings us home to God by consecrating the day and the night to His worship, we should be lost in a maze of worldly cares, anxieties, and difficulties through the day, and our sleep would bring us no calm repose.

In the Lord's prayer, which is prayer in its most perfect form, we are taught to acknowledge the Lord as the sole object of our worship ; to revere His name or attributes ; to desire the restoration of His kingdom within us, and throughout the world ; to resign our wills to His will in all His dispensations, and in every act of His providence, until earth shall become as heaven within us, and until the external form of our actions shall become one with the internal spirit

which rules them. We are also taught to desire that the whole earth may be brought to the worship of **the** Lord, in the harmony and peace of heaven. We are taught to pray that the Lord will provide all things for us, according to the measure of our manifold wants, both of bodily and spiritual kind, as known only to His infinite wisdom; that we may continually share His forgiving mercy, which we cannot receive unless we act under the genuine influence of it towards our neighbour,—since the heart that knows no benevolence, pity, and compassion to mankind shuts out the love of God, which, like the sun, always shines, but cannot act upon opaque bodies which resist its influence. We are taught to pray to be led out of temptation, by being delivered from the power of evil, and to ascribe our salvation and fitness for heaven to the power of the Lord, operating on and with our feeble endeavours, to whom alone we are directed to ascribe the glory for ever. This Divine prayer, which in its letter is a compendious and simple form of Christian worship, is so full of heavenly wisdom that there is not a single sentence in it but what contains infinitude: nor, indeed, can there be any form of true devotion,—not a single sigh of humble adoration, or an aspiration of celestial ardour, either of man during his pilgrimage, or of archangel in heaven, but what proceeds from, and is brought

home to, the tenor of this short but infinitely perfect form of words.

It is believed by many serious minds that the prolonged and multiplied forms of prayer which are in use at this day are, in great part, more calculated to promote the service of the lips than of the heart. When prayers are long, and stereotyped in form, the mind is apt to wander, because the attention wearies ; and thus the form of words which should enliven our devotion has the effect of diminishing its ardour. Many children, in their early years, are taught to pray by using vain repetitions, which they come to view as a task imposed, and rejoice when it is finished. It would be far more profitable to explain to them the Lord's prayer, in a manner suited to their infant capacities, than thus to make the service of God tedious, and even painful, to them. There can be little doubt that were our public prayers shortened, they would be better suited to the devout mind, and our worship would be more in conformity with our Lord's advice not to use vain repetitions. This might be easily accomplished by making the Lord's prayer, and the Divine Word, the standard of our prayers and of our praise.

On the Lord's Prayer.

PART II.

BECAUSE all the words, as well as the works, of our Lord contain infinitude in them, eternity itself cannot adequately unfold their meanings. The human mind, although finite, may nevertheless, in the contemplation of this Divine prayer, be opened more and more to interior views of it, useful both for the animation of the spirit of worship, and for the advancing progress of the spiritual life.

In this prayer are contained seven distinct petitions, through which may be traced the seven stages of regeneration, in agreement with the six days of creation and the seventh day of rest spoken of in the first chapter of Genesis. It begins with an acknowledgment of God: for prior to that acknowledgment, no prayer can be offered. It was in the beginning that God said, "Let there be light,—and there was light." When the darkness of infidelity is dispersed, and it

is seen that God indeed is, man can offer up the first petition of the prayer, that he may venerate his Creator in the boundless manifestations of His love, wisdom and power. In the second petition he prays that he may live under the influence of these principles, as an obedient subject of the Lord's kingdom: in the third he prays that his will, as well as his understanding, may be submitted to the Divine laws, that while the understanding is convinced of their excellence, the will may feel their control in its inmost affections: in the fourth he prays that he may arrive at a state of dependence, confiding for all things in the Divine Providence: in the fifth he prays that the laws of charity may be exercised in their forgiving operations; for he who can freely and cordially forgive injuries has arrived at charity's most exalted duties, and can do all manner of good to his neighbour. In the sixth petition he prays to be armed against the power of temptation from the kingdom of darkness: and in the seventh he prays for a deliverance from evil. Thus man is taught to pray for the attainment of the celestial state; and the prayer, beginning with an acknowledgment, ends with a glorification of the Lord. The gradual fulfilment of it may be traced from acknowledgment to veneration; from veneration to obedience; from obedience to love; from love to dependence; from

dependence to charity ; from charity to victory in temptation ; from victory in temptation to the cessation of the power of evil, which is the final establishment of the kingdom of peace within the soul.

On the Lord's Prayer.

PART III.

A COMPARISON of the Lord's prayer with the Sermon on the Mount discloses the existence of a beautiful and harmonious agreement between its petitions and the eight beatitudes. This harmony is not broken by the difference in the arrangement of the subjects, since every part of the Divine Discourse will be found to accord with some part of the Divine Prayer.

The blessing bestowed on those that hunger and thirst after righteousness refers to those states of the mind in which it turns towards God. The blessing bestowed on the meek, who shall inherit the earth, refers to those who in humility receive instruction, hallow the Lord's name, and become members of His Church. The blessing bestowed on the poor in spirit, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," and on the pure in heart, "for they shall see God," refers to the state when the Lord's kingdom is come, and His will is done on earth as it is in heaven, and when our dependence

for all things needful is on the Divine Providence. The blessing bestowed on the merciful, "for they shall obtain mercy," refers to the state in which our trespasses are forgiven, as we forgive those who trespass against us. The blessing bestowed on those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake refers to states of temptation from which deliverance is wrought by the Lord. The blessing bestowed on the peacemakers, "for they shall be called the children of God," refers to the state of peace which is the end alike of the beatitudes and of the Divine prayer, and for which "the kingdom, the power, and the glory" are to be ascribed to the Lord.

On the Divine Humanity of the Lord.

PART I.

DOUBTLESS this Divine subject will be the delightful contemplation of angels to all eternity; and the feeble apprehensions which our humblest and purest interior affections may be enabled to acquire, during our abode upon earth, will prove to have been but as the lisps of infancy. The thoughts which are here ventured to be offered may nevertheless be acceptable to the candid and congenial minds of those to whom such subjects are at all times interesting, however confessedly obscured in shade.

SECTION I.

That the Lord made His Humanity Divine, means, in a general sense, that by progressively putting off the maternal humanity by means of combats and victories, He advanced from a state of infancy, through degrees of intelligence and wisdom, into

oneness with the Essential Divinity. Thus by successive steps He glorified His Humanity; which He fully glorified by the last temptation of the cross. In the veil which He assumed it is our great privilege to contemplate Him through advancing stages of our regeneration, until, by imitative degrees of the Divine progress, we are enabled to throw off the obstructing imperfections and evils of our selfhood, and, by Divine influx from our glorified Lord, be again brought into conjunction with Him.

When the affection of truth humbly seeks for illustration, it will find it in the living Word, in the internal sense of which the Lord condescends at this day to manifest Himself in glory, or in His glorified Humanity. In the same Word we contemplate Him in the infirm maternal humanity; and, by the gradual renewing of our minds, through the influence of the Word of Truth, we may become recipients of the Divine influx from His glorified Humanity, from first principles to last: for, as the literal Word is the basis and continent of its internal sense, so, also, in the One manifested Lord "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Therefore, as the Apostle says, "is any one afflicted? let him pray" to that merciful Saviour who passed through the deepest trial of human sufferings. "Is he merry?" (or in gladness of heart) "let him sing psalms,"—let him address his

inmost thankfulness to his glorified Redeemer, the eternal and living Fountain of all beatitude.

We are informed by Swedenborg, that in the time of the most ancient or "celestial" church there was no written Word, for the men of that church had the Word inscribed on their hearts, inasmuch as the Lord taught them immediately, through heaven, what was good, and thereby what was true, and gave them to perceive both the good and the true from an affection of love and charity, and also to know them from immediate revelation. The very essential Word to them was the Lord. The succeeding church, which was "spiritual," had a written Word, as well historical as prophetic; and, in the beginning, this Word consisted only of such things as had been preserved and collected from the most ancient people. (See *A. R.* 3432.)

Thus the view is opened to the mind, that, when the principle of heavenly love was on the decline among the human race, and when the Divine Influence was thus weakened in its effect, the Divine Teaching took a different form. When affection, which is as it were the soul of truth, was grown weak, it was necessary to give to truth a permanent body, or fixedness, in order that the mind might not lose sight of the Object of its worship, and that the light of truth might not depend on the fluctuating state of

the affections: thus the Divine and Eternal Word took the outward and written form of a document. So soon, therefore, as the celestial church had lost its love, the promise of a Messiah gave permanency to religious faith, which was in less or greater illumination according to the states of the men of the second, or spiritual church. A faithful obedience to the Divine commandments was continually excited among them; first, by truths retained from the celestial church, and, afterwards, by a written Word. In the primeval state of the first, or celestial church, the Divine Human principle of Jehovah, passing through the heavens, could influence the celestial, spiritual, and natural mind of man, which, like the heavens, then formed a one, and were acted upon as such, from highest to lowest principles, or from the centre to the circumference. This church was in the innocence of infancy, and was governed by a spirit of love. But the infant must grow, and its internal mental powers must be developed. In his progress to adolescence, a youth questions, compares, and examines those lessons which were taught him during the innocence of his love, and he fancies that he realizes, in the opening powers of his mind, a superior and independent state. In like manner, the posterity of the most ancient church, looking more to their own understandings than to the Fountain of all

wisdom, began to disregard and despise Divine communications ; and by degrees they came even to fancy themselves gods. Having thus set up the pride of self-intelligence, and begun to worship that which, in its state of order, had been a true image of the Deity, they rendered it, in its perverted state, the foundation of succeeding idolatries ; since to make an idol of self-intelligence is not less insane than is the external worship of an inanimate stock or stone.

To the ancient or spiritual church succeeded the Israelitish church, which, in its decline, became a church of mere representatives, consisting of types and ceremonies, in which the spiritual things represented or signified were entirely overlooked. Thus the pride of self-intelligence, nurtured by the self-love of man, fell into degrees of life more and more remote from God, and into denser and denser shades of spiritual darkness. The reciprocity of the human mind can only be in proportion to its state of reception. Those commandments which were engraved on the *hearts* of the men of the celestial church, and which were retained in the *understandings* and affectionate minds of the men of the spiritual church, were delivered by the hand of Jehovah Himself, on tables of stone, to the Israelitish church, that they might remain in indelible characters on the *memory* ; and thus might at once confirm their Divine authority,

and discover the very low state of recipiency into which man had fallen.

SECTION II.

The Word, which is Divine, and which, in itself, is the Divine Humanity, is ever and invariably the same; but its manifestation has varied its form in every age, according to the state of human minds. Divine truth was wellnigh lost to human apprehension in external rites and ceremonies, when our Lord condescended to manifest Himself in the flesh. He veiled Himself in the human form, in order that He might become a living precept, the bright and perfect example of His own documents; that He might restore His perverted Word, fulfil the prophecies, and in His clouded omnipotence might approach without annihilating, and consign to their own homes of darkness, those infernal and active spirits, who, after gaining possession of men's minds, had begun to obsess their bodies. Our Lord, as the "Word made flesh," being clothed with human infirmities, was assailable by the hells; and these He conquered, in His maternal humanity, until at last nothing remained of the infirm nature derived from the Virgin mother; and, then, in His Divine Humanity—the Divine Truth united to the Divine Good—He reassumed His unveiled glory.

The Lord, by manifesting Himself in the flesh, became constantly visible and accessible, and thus resembled the written Word in its letter. His disciples, notwithstanding, who had so many opportunities of resorting to Him, and of hearing His Divine instructions, had but a very obscure and feeble apprehension of His Divinity; and while they resorted to Him as a man, they could not fully comprehend Him as God. He therefore acquainted them of the necessity, when His work should be accomplished, of withdrawing Himself from their bodily sight, that His Divine Spirit might have a more effectual operation upon their minds. "If I go not away, the Comforter cannot come," He said to them. They were favoured at the Transfiguration with a view, as it were by anticipation, of the Lord in glory, in order that their minds might be duly impressed with His true and Divine character; and thus, by being elevated into a higher state of perception, be prepared to receive the influence of Divine truth, proceeding from His glorified Humanity after His resurrection. Our Lord, during His abode on earth, had given new spirit and new life to the Word of the Old Testament by the precepts and doctrines of the Gospel; but only a few scattered rays of its internal sense could find reception in human minds. Though the prophecies were fulfilled, and the resurrection realized, still the hovering cloud hung upon

the sacred text. The nature of the Divine Trinity, as consisting of essence, form, and use, or of goodness, wisdom and effluent operation, under the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and as comprised in the Lord Jesus Christ, the one only manifested Lord—the Almighty Jehovah in a human form—was not as yet clearly understood; and the great truths relating to man's immediate resurrection at the time of death, and to the nature and order of the spiritual world, were still overhung by the veil of mystery. Our Lord's second advent was to reveal many things which He could not at His first advent disclose to His disciples, because they were not able to bear them. Their minds were slow to believe in man's resurrection in a spiritual body, on the third day after his decease, like unto the Lord's resurrection on the third day in a Divine Body: they were slow to receive the idea of a heaven without pre-eminence, where to be little is to be great, and to be most humble to be most elevated: and so they remained in the belief that the material body would rise from the grave, and that the visible world would be destroyed at the time of a general future judgment.

But the Lord is now come in the "clouds of heaven," with power and great glory, or, in other words, in the internal sense of the Word: and He is come, not to destroy, but to save the world; and by

gradual but sure progression, by the establishment of the peace and righteousness foretold by the prophecies, to unite it for ever with the heavens.

The Lord's sensual principle (which was assumed by a miraculous birth in the weakness of the maternal humanity, and was afterwards glorified and raised in power), having, in the course of its purifying process, resisted and overcome the hells, the disciple of the Lord can no longer be the slave of that principle, which has been glorified or "lifted up" by the Lord of Life, and thus secured against a host of enemies, and brought to be the foundation, or lowest existing basis, of the eternal order of the heavens.

Manifestation must ever be according to reception. The Divine influx, therefore, to the devout recipient since the Incarnation, must differ from the Divine influx through the heavens prior to the Incarnation. Influx is ever from highest to lowest principles in successive order : but that order having been broken by the posterity of the celestial church, the efficacy of the Divine influx is at this day restored by means of the Divine Humanity, from which it proceeds replete with restorative power, extending from the highest to the lowest fallen degrees in man ; so that a regenerate man is no longer liable, as at first, to recede from his higher love into self-love and self-idolatry.

SECTION III.

The regular series of the regenerating process must partake of similitude to the Lord's process of glorification, and thus terminate in a restoration of that image and likeness of God which has been wellnigh obliterated. The order of its progression is from faith to obedience, and from obedience to love. Man must steadfastly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the manifested Jehovah, and perseveringly shun evils as sins against Him; and thus, at last, his faith will be vivified by love, and will become one with love.

Under the first impressions of truth he will go with the Lord to the temple, and for awhile will hold disputation with the doctors, or the learned,—that is, he will contend earnestly for truth against those who pervert it. In a more advanced stage he will accompany his Lord to the marriage-feast of Cana, and will perceive in himself the water turned into wine,—that is, he will enter into the heavenly marriage state of the new will and understanding, wherein his truth will become spiritualized by its union with goodness. In the further progress of that union he will be enabled successively to overcome his evil propensities, until they are at length nailed to the cross with his crucified Redeemer: he will resuscitate with Him to newness of life, until truth is “glorified” in him: and he will

then be fitted to receive the Lord in His second advent ; and, from being the disciple of His truth, will become the disciple of His love.

The Saviour must be spiritually born in us by regeneration ; He must put off in us, by fighting for us against our spiritual enemies, those evils which He put off, in Himself, with the maternal humanity ; He must be crucified in us to the death or quiescence of our former corrupt natural life ; He must resuscitate in Divine truth in us, and establish His kingdom of love in us, before we can be fitted for His heavenly kingdom, and before the incarnation of the Divine Humanity can produce in us its triumphant and eternally saving effects. Thus shall we recover the image and likeness of God in Christ Jesus, which can never more be effaced : the external man, though distinct in degree, will be united with the internal in corresponding harmony ; and the Church immortal, which now descends from heaven, will establish its dominion with us for ever.

Many, whom curiosity may excite to contemplate the wonders of the new dispensation, which is gradually diffusing its light through the world, may, for awhile, gladly receive its testimony in the imaginative delights of the natural mind ; but none can have any part or lot in the benefits of the second advent who do not spiritually undergo the process of the first.

We must die to self before we can have life in the Lord. We must have genuine truth before we can have heavenly love. The Lord is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life;" and every one who would participate in that Life must, with heartfelt humiliation, apply to the manifested Jehovah, as the only Way which can introduce the sincere penitent to the Divine Truth, and to that Divine Love and Life which in its bosom contains eternal felicity.

On the Divine Humanity of the Lord.

PART II.

THE attempt which is sometimes made to penetrate, by means of intellectual effort alone, into the depths of mysterious spiritual truth may be described as an endeavour to work spiritual mines by means of the tools of merely natural knowledge; which is impossible. The veins of the mine of spiritual truth can only be opened and traced by the perceptive power of those minds in which the intellect is animated by warm and ever-maturing heavenly affections.

There has been much controversy as to the nature of our Lord's resuscitated Body: but, in the endeavours which have been made to render this sublime and mysterious subject more intelligible, the distinction between what is *material* and what is *substantial* seems very frequently to have been lost sight of. The terms "flesh and blood," when applied to our Lord's resuscitated body, will, to the natural mind,

ever convey an idea of materiality ; but to the spiritual mind they convey an idea of substance. It was doubtless no other "flesh and blood" than that of which the Lord's Supper is a symbol. The Divine Love, manifested in human form, was made apparently tangible to those who required irresistible and ocular proof of the Lord's resurrection ; and their ideas, being still sensual, were impressed with the apparent materiality of what they saw. But, notwithstanding this appearance, the Body of our risen Lord was certainly not material, but Divine-substantial. It was because it had been wholly divested of materiality that it could no longer be seen by the eyes of the body, and therefore became visible and invisible at intervals to the spiritual vision of the disciples, who, even when in the exercise of that vision, had no other idea than that what they saw was seen with their natural eyes. The same Divine condescension that could afford comfort to the natural minds of the disciples, by telling them that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, (by which the judgment from Divine truths was represented), and that could suffer an impression to remain on their minds that at "the last day" their material bodies would resuscitate, could give to Thomas the satisfaction of apparently feeling, with the material hand, the wounds of his

crucified Lord; and, as a further conviction of the reality of His resurrection, could in appearance eat broiled fish with His disciples. To affirm that a spiritual body, and still less a Divine Body, could not partake of material food, is surely unnecessary.

The Correspondence of the Horse.

THE horse, when mentioned in the Divine Word, corresponds to the understanding of truth, and the parallel may be seen by a consideration of the general usefulness of the animal, of the delight it takes in exercise, of its form—so conducive to activity, and of its obedience to its rider, like unto the obedience of the understanding to the will. There are horses that trip, that are timid, and that are restive ; and these qualities are found in human intellects. Some horses are docile, some are vicious, and some cannot be controlled ; and in human understandings these varying properties are conspicuous : stubbornness, teachableness, and wrong-headedness mark the different characters we daily meet with. The horse of the truest symmetry and fleetest movement, with a safe manner of going, is most esteemed : and an understanding finely organized, of quick comprehension and sound judgment, is most highly prized. The colour of the horse denotes the special characteristic quality of the understanding of truth, which must be sought in the correspondence of colours.

The Correspondence of the Vine.

THE vine, with its fruit, corresponds to spiritual truth ; and the exactness of the correspondence may, in many particulars, be clearly and beautifully unfolded. The tree spreads its branches with great quickness, but it requires much sun to ripen its fruit, which in a cold climate will not come to perfection. In like manner, Divine truth, where the affections are cold, cannot arrive at maturity, but will remain in a raw, cold, and sour state. When the grapes are ripe, and the juice is expressed, it has to undergo fermentation before it is fit for use : and, similarly, spiritual truth must undergo its fermentation, and get rid of heterogeneous properties and adhering falsehoods before it can come into use. Wine must be kept for some time before it is fit to drink ; so, truth must be for some time retained and settled in the mind before it can come into life. If wine is kept too long before it is drunk, it will perish : and Divine truth, if after a certain time it is not brought into life, will likewise perish. When wine has

undergone its fermentation, it should be kept cool : and, similarly, Divine truth, when purified in the mind, should be kept cool, and guarded from the heat of disorderly passion. Wine, beyond the quantity well digested, will intoxicate : and so will truth. Wine is the best and most exhilarating of all cordials for the body ; and so is Divine truth for the mind. The gardener, in pruning his vine, will be careful to preserve the bearing wood in succession, and lop off the useless branches ; so ought we to look to those branches of truth that are fruitful, and to lop off such as, after a certain time, cease to be useful : such, for example, as the rudiments of truth, to which we no longer return. As the vine is continually putting forth new bearing wood, so, in like manner, does Divine truth become increasingly productive if we are careful of its culture. Only that quantity of wine is of use which promotes health ; and only that quantity of truth is of use which promotes good. A bad state of health may prevent the good use of wine ; and a bad state of the affections will prevent the genuine use of truth. If the health be sound, it will draw from wine its best qualities ; and if goodness be the sound and leading principle of the affections, it will derive from Divine truth an infinite variety of excellent properties and uses.

The Correspondence of the Dove.

THE dove corresponds to the truth and good of faith, which constitute the spiritual marriage. It is distinguished by its fidelity to its mate, and by its fond and wooing attentions; in like manner, the principles of genuine truth and goodness are enamoured of each other. The dove is remarkable for the velocity of its flight, especially when danger threatens, or when returning to its mate: in like manner, truth will quickly disappear when beset by evil and the false; and, if separated from its correspondent good affection, it impatiently returns to it. The dove, if carried far from home and then let loose, immediately darts upwards, and, as if endowed with miraculous keenness of vision, it darts in a straight line towards its abode: so, when truth from goodness has been imprisoned or borne down by any uncongenial force, when set free, it mounts upwards to its elevated views; with clearness of vision it descries its abode in the Sacred Word, and with delight it returns to its home. As doves delight

to stand in the soft descending shower, so are truth and goodness refreshed with instructive discourses of wisdom. The dove descended at our Lord's baptism as the innocent emblem of truth from goodness, in the form of which our Lord manifested Himself upon earth.

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